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GENERAL SERVICES

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LIFELINE AND MINNESOTA TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP)

The Lifeline Assistance (Lifeline) program, established by the Federal Communications Commission under 47CFR54, is a means of maintaining and preserving universal service by providing a reduction in the recurring price of basic local residential exchange access service to qualifying low-income residential subscribers.

TAP is a state sponsored assistance program under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 237 and is designed to make telephone service accessible to qualifying low-income residential households. Through this program, eligible households will receive a monthly discount on their telephone service.

1. General

- a. Lifeline is a federally-funded reduction of the subscriber line charge (SLC) and a reduction of local service charges. The maximum rate changes depending on the company's approved SLC tariffs. Eligible applicants living on or near federally recognized Tribal Lands/reservations will receive an additional credit of up to \$25.00 (Tier Four) sufficient to reduce the monthly rate for local service to no less than \$1.00 inclusive of this subscriber line charge.
- b. Federal Universal Service Fund End User Charge will not be billed to Lifeline customers.
- c. Local service for Lifeline subscribers may not be disconnected for non-payment of toll charges.
  - 1). Toll Restriction Service will be provided to Lifeline subscribers at no charge.
  - 2). Lifeline subscribers are not required to accept Toll Restriction Service as a condition to avoid disconnection of local service for non-payment of toll.
  - 3). Lifeline subscribers are not required to pay a service deposit in order to initiate service if the subscriber voluntarily elects to receive Toll Restriction Service.
- d. Partial payments from Lifeline subscribers will be applied first to local service charges and then to toll charges.

2. Eligibility Requirements

- a. Lifeline will be provided for one (1) telephone line per household, at the subscriber's principal place of residence, to those individuals who meet the eligibility requirements.
- b. The applicant has income at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or participates in one of the following programs:
  - Medicaid/Medical Assistance
  - Food Support/Food Stamps
  - Supplemental Security Income
  - Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8
  - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
  - National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch Program (N)
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Minnesota Family Investment Program, or MFIP) (N)

GENERAL SERVICES

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LIFELINE AND MINNESOTA TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP) (Continued)

2. Eligibility Requirements (Continued)

Individuals who do not qualify under any of the above but live on or near a federally recognized reservation may qualify if the applicant receives benefits from at least one of the following programs:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
  - Tribally Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
  - Head Start (only for those meeting its income qualifying standard)
  - National School Lunch Program's free lunch program
- c. The applicant signs a document certifying under penalty of perjury that the applicant receives benefits from one of the programs listed and identifying the program or programs from which that consumer receives benefits.
- d. The applicant signs a document agreeing to notify the carrier if that consumer ceases to participate in the program or programs. When the company is notified by the customer that the customer no longer participates in one of the above programs, the federal credits to that customer's monthly charges shall cease beginning with the start of the billing cycle beginning in the month after the month in which notification is received.

3. Eligibility Revocation

If the telephone company discovers that conditions exist that disqualify the recipient of Lifeline Assistance, the support will be discontinued. The customer will be billed retroactively to whichever is the most recent of the dates Lifeline assistance commenced or the recipient no longer qualified for the service not to exceed 12 months.

4. Eligibility for the State TAP Credit

- a. The state TAP credit is only available to residential subscribers who meet the eligibility requirements for the Federal Lifeline Credit in 2 above.
- b. The customer must reside in Minnesota or have moved to Minnesota and intend to remain.

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GENERAL SERVICES

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LIFELINE AND MINNESOTA TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP) (Continued)

5. Regulations

- a. The Federal Lifeline and state TAP credit will begin at the customer's earliest possible billing cycle but no later than the second billing cycle after the date the application for the Federal Lifeline and state TAP credit is received by the telephone company.
- b. A service charge shall not be billed to establish qualification for either the Federal Lifeline or state TAP credit.
- c. When a customer enrolls for the state TAP credit, the Company is reimbursed for the cost of the service order activity.

6. Funding

The Federal Lifeline Credit is funded through the FCC universal service program. The state TAP credit shall be funded through the state Telephone Assistance Plan Surcharge on residence and business access lines which pay the 911 surcharge.

7. Rates

The surcharge rate is the effective rate ordered by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. The Company is responsible for billing, collecting and remitting the surcharge to appropriate government agency.

The total Lifeline Credit (State and Federal) that a customer is eligible for is: (not including Tribal Land Discounts)	\$12.75	(C)
State TAP Credit	\$3.50	(C)
Federal Lifeline Credit	\$9.25	